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ANNEX 28

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Secretary of State
Washington
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Subject: British visualize economic betterment of the Middle East as "twofold race against time."

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In the course of a lengthy luncheon conversation September 23, 1947, with Mr. Dennis A. Greenhill, Middle East Secretariat, British Foreign Office, Mr. Greenhill voiced the following idea as being one held very generally in the Foreign Office and among British Foreign Service officers stationed in the Middle East.

It is incumbent upon the British and American Governments, as well as upon the World Bank, to exert every effort within their power to improve the standard of living in the Near Eastern Countries as soon as possible. Mr. Greenhill visualizes the situation as being a "twofold race against time." The first race is to immunize the Middle East from communist doctrines by alleviating the economic and social disabilities which offer such a fertile ground for the spread of communism. The second race, which particularly affects Egypt, is the race against population increases. Greenhill believes that unless all the governments concerned push on with the Lake Tsana dam and similar projects designed to increase the amount of water available for irrigation in Egypt, the rapidly growing Egyptian population will, through sheer force of numbers, depress economic conditions in Egypt with a consequent effect on conditions in neighboring countries. Work on irrigation expansion now should provide enough land to cope with the 28,000,000 population in Egypt in 1980.

Mr. Greenhill said that while all British officials in London and in the Middle East are in close agreement regarding the kind of steps which can and should be taken, it is extremely difficult for the Middle East Secretariat to get from the British Treasury and Board of Trade any firm commitments as to what the British Government is prepared to spend on the well being of the Middle East. The current economic crisis in Britain has tightened the purse strings and Mr. Greenhill doubted that the British Government in the foreseeable future could afford to play a role more active than that envisaged by the establishment of the British Middle East office in Cairo and the Middle East Secretariat in London (i.e. advice to Arab States when they ask for it and some assistance in the recruitment of British experts and teachers to be hired by the individual Arab countries.) "This being the case" said Mr. Greenhill gloomily "it is beginning to look as though only the United States Government can give practical help to the Middle East. We certainly hope that you will."

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HAWKINS

cc to American Embassy, Cairo
cc to American Embassy, Baghdad
cc to American Legation, Damascus
cc to American Legation, Beirut
cc to American Legation, Jidda

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CRC/MR
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